



Australian Bureau of Statistics

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POPULATION CHANGES IN THE ACT

The ABS released its latest estimates of the resident population of Australia, the states and territories on 2 June 2006, in **Australian Demographic Statistics, December quarter 2005** (cat. no. 3101.0).

As at 31 December 2005, the estimated resident population of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) was 326,700 persons, an increase of 2,400 persons (0.8%) from the previous year. This article provides additional information about the trends and directions of the ACT population.

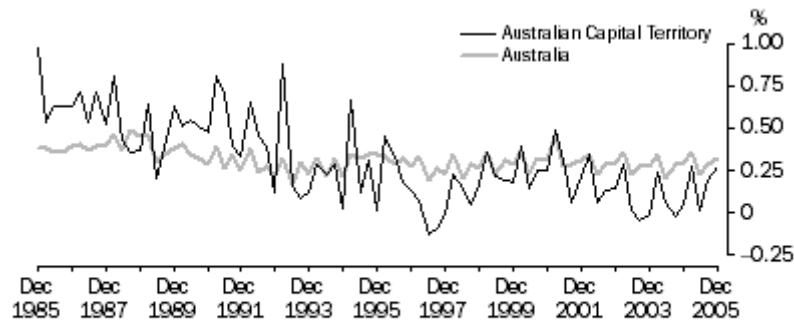
HISTORICAL POPULATION TRENDS

Over the last 20 years the ACT's total population growth rate has varied considerably compared with that for Australia. During the mid-1980s and early 1990s, the ACT's population growth rate was higher than that for Australia. However, population growth rates in the ACT have been below the national average since 1994.



Quarterly population growth rates for the ACT are unstable in comparison to the rest of Australia. This is mainly due to the ACT's small population size, but is also associated with seasonal patterns of population growth (e.g. influxes of tertiary students at the start of the academic year). During the last fifteen years, the strongest growth rates in the ACT have been in March quarters.

QUARTERLY POPULATION GROWTH RATES (a)



Source: Australian Demographic Statistics, December quarter 2005 (cat. no. 3101.0), Time Series Spreadsheets.

WHY IS THE ACT POPULATION CHANGING?

There are three components of population change that constantly effect the size and geographic distribution of the ACT's population:

- natural increase (the number of births minus the number of deaths);
- net overseas migration (net permanent and long-term movement); and
- net interstate migration.

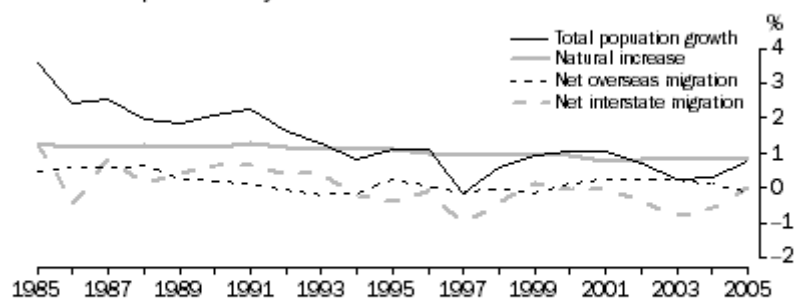
Definitions for these measures are provided under the **end note** below.

All of these changes have an impact on the ACT population, although some have a greater impact than others. For example, the low rates of population growth experienced in the ACT over recent years is largely the result of people leaving the ACT to live in other parts of Australia, or negative net interstate migration.

Components of growth

As shown in the graph below, natural increase has consistently added more people to the ACT population than net interstate migration or net overseas migration. However, while natural increase has been reasonably stable from year to year, net interstate migration (and, to a lesser extent, net overseas migration) has been far more volatile. Generally speaking, changes in the total population growth rate for the ACT are driven by changes in net interstate migration.

ANNUAL POPULATION GROWTH RATES (a), Year ended 31 December:
Australian Capital Territory



Source: Australian Demographic Statistics, December Quarter 2005 (cat. no. 3101.0), Time Series Spreadsheets.

During the year ended 31 December 2005, the ACT experienced a total population growth rate of 0.8%.

Natural increase added 2,800 people (0.8%) to the ACT population, with 4,200 births and 1,500 deaths registered to ACT residents. After recording population losses due to net interstate migration since 1998, there was also a small net gain (70 persons) from interstate migration during the 2005 calendar year. During this year, it is estimated that 18,400 people moved to the ACT from interstate, while slightly fewer moved from the ACT to other parts of Australia.

Net overseas migration reduced the size of the ACT population by 380 persons during 2005. This represents the first net overseas migration loss for the ACT since 1999.

POPULATION DENSITY AND POPULATION CHANGES WITHIN THE ACT

As at 30 June 2005, the ACT was the most densely populated state or territory, with 138.4 people per square kilometre. This was followed by Victoria (with 22.1 people per square kilometre) and New South Wales (8.5 people per square kilometre). The population density for Australia as a whole was 2.6 people per square kilometre.

In 2004-05, population growth continued in areas on the suburban fringes of Canberra, as well as in a number of inner city Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) (**see end note**).

Statistical Subdivisions

In contrast to recent years, during which Gungahlin-Hall Statistical Subdivision (SSD) (**see end note**) experienced the largest increases in population of all ACT SSDs, North Canberra SSD recorded the largest growth in 2004-05, up 860 people (or 2.1%). Gungahlin-Hall SSD increased by 750 people (or 2.5%), followed by South Canberra SSD while increased by 550 people (or 2.3%). Weston Creek-Stromlo SSD recorded little change, while Tuggeranong SSD decreased by 770 people, Belconnen SSD by 150 people, and Woden Valley by 170 people.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY, Population change and density - 2000-2005

	ERP at 30 June (a)			Change		
	2000	2004	2005p	2000-2005p (b)	2004-2005	Population density
Statistical Division and Statistical Subdivision	no.	no.	no.	%	%	no.
Canberra	314 848	323 743	324 786	0.6	0.3	403.2
North Canberra	38 249	40 815	41 677	1.7	2.1	201.6
Belconnen	85 018	85 579	85 388	0.1	-0.2	658.7
Woden Valley	32 385	31 812	31 647	-0.5	-0.5	1 106.5
Weston Creek-Stromlo	23 703	22 545	22 552	-1	0	216.3
Tuggeranong	90 535	89 829	89 059	-0.3	-0.9	556.8
South Canberra	23 097	23 536	24 084	0.8	2.3	278.8
Gungahlin-Hall	21 861	29 627	30 379	6.8	2.5	337.3
Australian Capital Territory - Bal	367	376	375	0.4	-0.3	0.2
Total	315 215	324 119	325 161	0.6	0.3	138.4

p preliminary

(a) Estimated resident population at 30 June

(b) Annual average.

Source: **Regional Population Growth, Australia, Electronic Delivery, Jun 2005** (cat. no. 3218.0.55.001).

Statistical Local Areas

On the northern edge of Canberra, Gungahlin-Hall - SSD Bal (which includes the suburbs of Gungahlin Town Centre and Harrison) recorded the largest increase in population of SLAs in the ACT in 2004-05, up 780 people. The nearby SLA of Amaroo increased by 200 people. Dunlop, on the north-western fringe of Belconnen SSD, increased by 260 people, while Banks, the southern-most suburb of Canberra, increased by 250 people.

In Canberra's inner north, the SLA of Turner increased by 350 people, while Braddon and City increased by 200 and 110 people respectively. In South Canberra SSD, the population of Barton increased by 310 people and Kingston increased by 220 people.

Around half of the SLAs in the ACT experienced decreases in population in 2004-05. The largest decreases was recorded in Kambah (down 160 people), followed by Conder (down 150 people), and Wanniasa and Ngunnawal (each down 140 people).

Population growth in the surrounding region

Population growth in New South Wales Local Government Areas (LGAs) (**see end note**) adjacent to the ACT continued in 2004-05, in part due to their proximity to Canberra. The population of Queanbeyan (C) increased by 900 people, Palerang (A) increased by 160 people, and Yass Valley (A) increased by 120 people.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from **Australian Demographic Statistics, December quarter 2005** (cat. no. 3101.0) and **Regional Population Growth 2004-05** (cat. no. 3218.0), available from the ABS web site www.abs.gov.au

End Note

Natural increase: The excess of births over deaths.

Net interstate migration: The difference between the number of Australian residents who move to a given state or territory from elsewhere in Australia and the number of residents who leave that state or territory to live elsewhere in Australia.

Net overseas migration: The difference between the number of people coming to Australia to live for 12 months or more (including Australian residents returning after a long-term absence overseas) and the number of people leaving Australia to live overseas for 12 months or more (including adjustments for changes in traveller intentions).

Statistical Local Areas (SLAs) - Geographical areas that are, in most cases identical with, or have been formed from a division of, whole Local Government Areas. In other cases they represent unincorporated areas. In aggregate, SLAs cover the whole of a state or territory without gaps or overlaps.

Statistical Subdivisions (SSDs) - These are of intermediate size and are defined as socially and economically homogenous regions characterised by identifiable links between the inhabitants. In the non-urban areas an SSD is characterised by identifiable links between the economic units within the region, under the unifying influence of one or more major towns or cities.

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